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**SJR 19, TORTURE RESOLUTION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS PASSED
BY THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE**

Sacramento, CA- Senate Joint Resolution (SJR 19), which requires all California health boards to notify their licensees that those who participate in torture or cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody are in violation of international, federal and state laws, passed 21-13 on the Senate floor today.

This resolution, authored by Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas, further requests that all relevant California agencies notify California-licensed health professionals that those who participate in torture may one day be subject to prosecution. It will now go to the Secretary of the Senate who will transmit copies to the federal government and all relevant California agencies.

“Torture is much more than a political issue. It is an ethical, moral and spiritual issue that has not only become a shame, but it is an evil in our midst,” Ridley-Thomas said. “Right-minded Americans understand that to protect foreign prisoners of war from torture, also protects the rights of our citizens if they become war prisoners.”

“In this period of international crisis, we must be ever reminded of what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated so emphatically, ‘An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.’”

During recent Congressional hearings, the horrific images of tortured prisoners at Abu Ghraib revealed that what the international community calls “torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment” is common in places where the U.S. oversees the treatment of “enemy combatants” and “detainees” in the War on Terror.

The knowledge of torture and physical and psychological abuse was widespread at both the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and known to medical personnel.

As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development, which has oversight over medical and health professional licenses, Ridley-Thomas held a hearing and introduced the Resolution in the Senate that states that the U.S. Department of Defense has “failed to oversee the ethical conduct of California-licensed health professionals related to torture.”

The Resolution, introduced in January in commemoration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., received extensive supportive testimony and passed out of the Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee 5-0. The California Medical Association, the California Nurses Association, the American Friends Service Committee, Program for Torture Victims, and Physicians for Social Responsibility testified in support.

Assemblymember Curren Price, who co-authored the measure and introduced it on the Assembly floor said, “As a state, California can withdraw its consent to torture by demanding that its health professionals remember their oath to “First, do no harm.” It passed through the Assembly 43-31.

The Resolution is co-sponsored by The American Friends Service Committee, Program for Torture Victims, and Physicians for Social Responsibility who initiated the “Californians to Stop the Torture Campaign.”

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